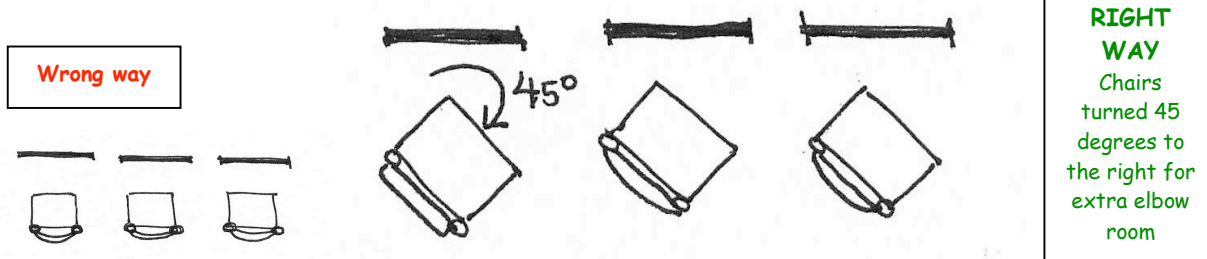


The Top Ten Secrets of Great Flute Playing

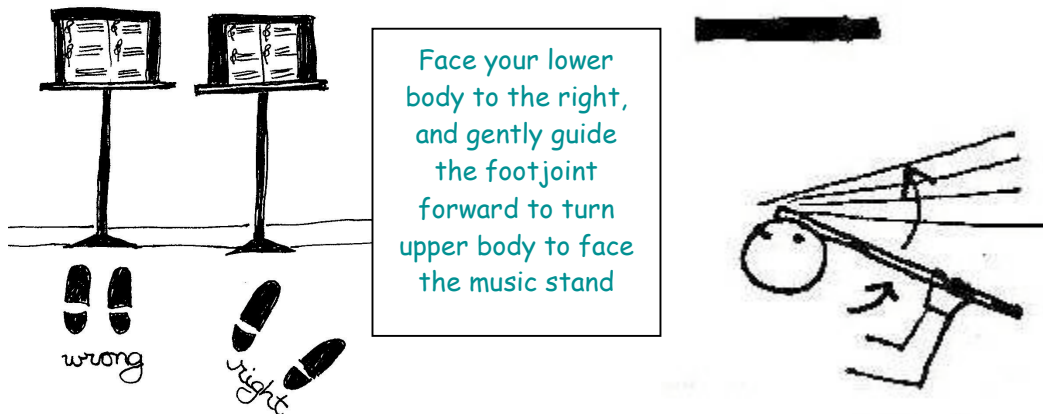
A hand-out for band flutists by Jennifer Cluff

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1. Flute players should always move their rehearsal chairs so that they point 45° to the right. This leaves room for the right elbow so that it doesn't get tangled up with the chair's back rest. It also help give more room to the flute section members so that they don't poke each other in the ribs with their flutes. Having one music stand per player also helps posture.

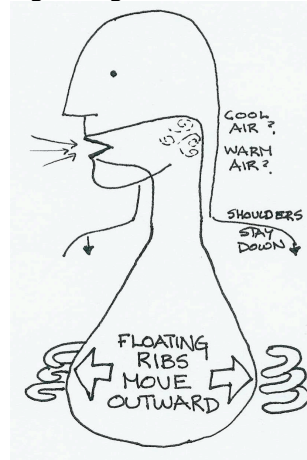


2. Make a point of standing up whenever you practice the flute, and face your feet, hips and knees 45° to the right. Then swing the upper half of your body to face the music stand. This prevents arm fatigue, as the shoulders are less tight, and makes it easier to fill up with air.

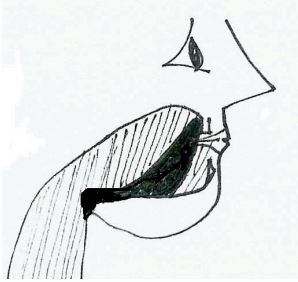


3. To fill up with air really fast and really well, deliberately sense the temperature of the air on the back of the throat. This triggers the lower half of the lungs and makes the lungs expand from the bottom first, where they are larger and more pear-shaped. Notice that the three lowest ribs are "floating" and not attached in front like the rest of the ribs. Let the floating ribs go outward in a 360° circle.

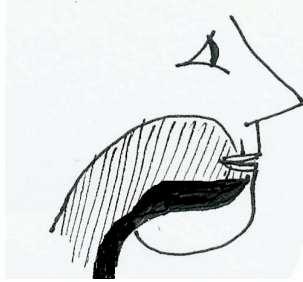
Easy Breathing
Each time you breathe in for the flute, feel the temperature of the air on the back of your throat to see whether it's hot or cold. This triggers the lower lungs to open up very quickly and fill with air.



4. When tonguing say "tu tu tu" as in French. Not "who, thoo, foo" or even "phooey" (!) The tip of the tongue should be used on the roof of the mouth behind your top front teeth, to lightly interrupt a fast stream of constant air. After each "tu" the tongue tip should rest lightly behind the bottom teeth, ready to strike again. Keep the mouth cavity well open, with the tongue resting on the floor of the mouth, when not in use.

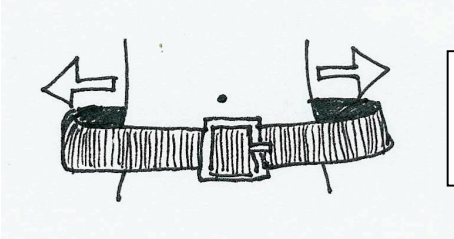


The tip of the tongue says "Tu" behind the top teeth, and then rests behind lower teeth during slurs. The tongue needs fast air to operate smoothly and quietly, so keep the air speed very constant when tonguing.



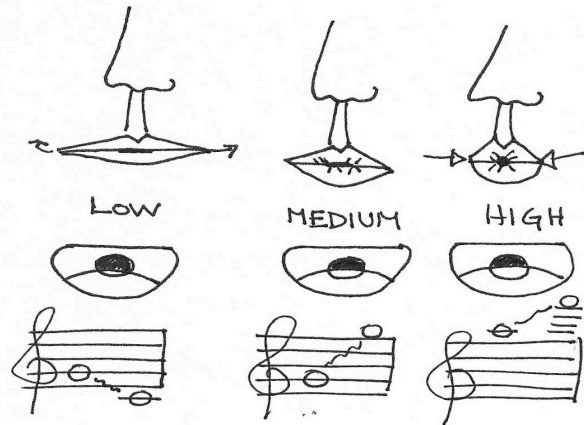
5. To sustain the tone with a rich, full sound, use the "belt trick". Fill up with air, as described in no. 3 above, and pretend you have a belt around your middle that is WAY TOO BIG for you. Make the imaginary belt taut by pushing out all around in a 360, and leave keep the imaginary belt taut the whole time you exhale into the flute. This engages extra abdominal muscles that help control the exhalation.

Inhale and make your stomach expand to feel the imaginary belt tighten



Exhale into the flute and keep the imaginary belt taut to steady the air

6. Move the lip corners forward as you go higher and higher on the flute so that the center of the lips move gradually closer and closer to the far side of the blowing edge. The low notes need only $\frac{1}{4}$ of the blow hole covered to sound well. The high notes may require over $\frac{1}{2}$ the blow hole covered to sound sweet and clear. Don't roll the flute inward with the wrists to achieve this, move the lips gradually, gradually forward.

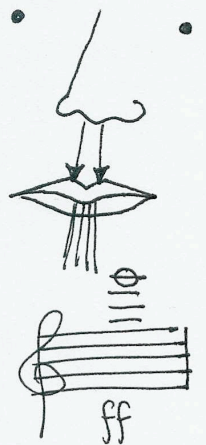
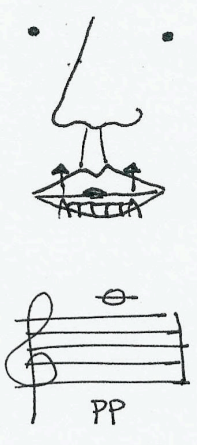


7. To tune a flute, push the headjoint inward more and more to go sharper, and pull the headjoint outward bit by bit to go flatter. When you are in good practice, and have found the perfect spot to be in tune with the tuner (A-440, or A-442, ask your band director) use an indelible marker to mark the best spot. Remember that cold flutes need to be warmed with the keys down and by breathing warm air into them before you check your tuning.

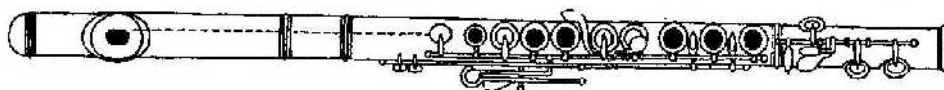
If you find you play sharp when you play loudly and flat when you play softly, use this trick:

For Forte: Pull the upper lip downward and aim the air down into the flute.

For Piano: Raise your bottom teeth gradually upwards so to counteract the downward pull of the upper lip.

<p>LOUD</p> 	<p>Forte "FULP"</p> <p>For Forte Upper Lip Pulls downward. This causes the jaw to drop downward and allows the airstream to be angled downward.</p> <p>Aiming downward when playing loudly corrects sharpness of pitch</p>	<p>Piano "PLOT"</p> <p>For Piano Lower Teeth move upward. This causes the jaw to raise ever so slightly, and this automatically corrects flatness when playing softly. Be sure and keep the air speed fast enough even at soft dynamics to keep pitch.</p>	<p>SOFT</p> 
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8. Always line up your headjoint so that when you play your flute, the tops of the keys face the ceiling. The keys should *not* tilt slightly backwards. Flutists with deep chins may want to start with the center of the blow-hole lined up with the center of the keys. Flutists with almost no dip in the chin may want to line up the far-edge of the blow hole with the center of the keys. Finger length and hands size also play a role. Adjust your headjoint's alignment to the keys to insure the keys always face the ceiling. The correct alignment for your own body type can also help keep the shoulders down and relaxed.



9. When assembling and disassembling your flute, don't place your hands on the moving parts such as the keys, rods and levers. Place your hands on the sturdy and smooth parts of the tube only. Sadly, it only takes a few weeks to unknowingly bend the flute's keys enough to create a fuzzy tone due to pad leaks.
10. Finally: Stay curious and follow up on any questions you have about the flute. When you find that you need to know more you may wish to take weekly private flute lessons with a qualified flute teacher.

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